



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Discusses the Importance of Providing Accessible Voting Opportunities to California's Voters with Disabilities

Notes His Unprecedented Efforts in Remarks to Disability Rights Town Hall Meeting

SACRAMENTO, CA - Secretary of State Bruce McPherson today delivered remarks to participants of a Townhall Telemeeting hosted by the California Disability Community Action Network (CDCAN). The Townhall meeting focused on voting and elections in 2006 and the impact on voters with disabilities.

"One of my top priorities as Secretary of State is to ensure that all voters, including voters with disabilities have the tools they need to participate in the democratic process," said Secretary McPherson. "I applaud the efforts of CDCAN, the County Elections Officials, and those who participated in the meeting today for creating this open dialogue to discuss the importance of accessible voting. We have made tremendous strides in this area, providing accessible voting opportunities for all Californians statewide. But, even with all we have done, there is still more to do and I look forward to continuing our efforts to provide the best and most reliable resources for all of California's voters."

Marty Omoto, Executive Director for CDCAN said, "Hundreds of people with disabilities from across California participated in the townhall and came away strongly impressed with the Secretary of State and County Elections Officials and their partnership of commitment toward making voting accessible for all, and to making every vote count."

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requires that each polling place in California have at least one accessible voting machine for voters with disabilities to cast their ballot independently and privately starting with the 2006 elections. Since becoming Secretary of State, Secretary McPherson has partnered with Independent Living Centers throughout the state to assist and encourage individuals with disabilities to take part in the electoral process.

Secretary McPherson also announced the availability of a new brochure - *Your Voting Rights - A Guide for Voters with Disabilities*. Among other things, the brochure contains key information about the Official State Ballot Pamphlet on audiocassette, polling place accessibility and accessible voting equipment. The guides are now available in English and Spanish and will soon be available in large print, Braille, and on audiocassette. They will be distributed to and available from County Election Offices, Independent Living Centers, and other disability organizations throughout California. To order copies, please call the Secretary of State's Elections Division at 916-653-7166.